

Toasts and Toasting



Toasts can range from the most routine – “To us!” – to the most touching – an homage from the father of the bride that can make grown men cry. The following is a guide to toasting basics:

- At a dinner party, it’s the host or hostess’s prerogative to give the first toast.
- If a host doesn’t offer a toast, a guest may propose a toast saluting the hosts.
- Typically, toasts are proposed as soon as the wine, Champagne, or other beverage is served – usually at the beginning of the meal, or just before dessert.
- The person proposing the toast stands, or raises a glass and asks for everyone’s attention before launching into the toast.
- At the conclusion of the toast, everyone except the honoree(s) raises their glasses and drinks.
- The honoree acknowledges the toast with a smile or nod.
- No need for everyone to drain their glasses during a toast – a sip will do just fine.
- You don’t need an alcoholic beverage to propose or drink to a toast.

Prepared Toasts

If you’re going to deliver more than the simplest toast, it’s a good idea to prepare it beforehand and mentally rehearse so you don’t fumble over the words. Keep it short, positive, and to the point. A touch of humor is acceptable, but keep it clean; stories that might embarrass the honoree are off-limits.

Spur-of-the-Moment Toasts

If the mood is right, it's lovely to give an informal toast to good friends around the table. The best toasts are short and come from the heart. If you're stuck, try to tie the toast to the occasion.

- "To Suzanne—a terrific hostess and a fabulous cook."
- "To Anya: May each birthday find you among good friends."
- "To Phil—a great boss who will be an even better VP. Congratulations."
- "To the class of '12—the smartest and best-looking by far!"